

**Minutes of the Schools Forum – 9<sup>th</sup> March 2023**

**Via Microsoft Teams and You Tube.**

**Status: Draft**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Establishment</b>	<b>Representing</b>
Claire Whiting (CW) <b>Chair</b>	Redhill Primary Academy	Academies
Christobel Cousins (CC)	Lilleshall Primary School	Maintained Primaries – Newport Cluster
Paul Roberts (PR)	Queensway Special Academy	Special Academies
Darren Lennon (DE)	Linden Centre PRU	Maintained PRUs
Penny Hustwick (PH)	ABC Day Nurseries	Private, Voluntary and Independent Nurseries
Tim Davis (TD)	Group Accountant	Representative of the Director of Finance
Andy Wood (AW)	Senior Accountant - Schools	Representative of the Director of Finance

**1. Apologies - AW.**

1.1 Apologies were received from:

Lee Hadley – Abraham Darby Academy.  
Shirley Reynolds – Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education.  
Jo Britton – Executive Director of Children’s Services  
Tracey Smart – Finance Manager.  
Simon Wellman - Director of Children’s Services.  
Sarah Roberts – High Ercall Primary School.  
Rachel Cook – Newdale Primary School.  
Michael Scott – Newport Girls’ High School

**2. Minutes of the 19<sup>th</sup> January 2023 meeting and matters arising - GE**

2.1 The minutes of the 19<sup>th</sup> January 2023 were accepted as a true and accurate record. A copy of the minutes can be found here:

[Minutes of 19<sup>th</sup> January 2023.](#)

2.2 Minute 2.2 CW asked if any progress had been made finding a governor member. AW advised that there had been no response to the request for a governor member that was placed on the Education Bulletin on the 9<sup>th</sup> February 2023.

2.3 Minute 3.12. CW asked if SW had updated the Primary Heads Forum (PHF) on proposals for funding for early years pupils with SEND. No one at the meeting remembered this being raised at the PHF but this may have been due to the PHF working in groups at the last meeting.

### **3. Early Years Budget 2023/24 - TD**

3.1 The Forum were provided with a paper which can be found here:

[Early Year Budget Paper for FY2023/2024.](#)

3.2 TD talked through the main points of the paper highlighting the less than favourable settlement for the early years' sector. Due to the ESFA remodelling their formulas and updating their data; the allocations for T&W resulted in an increase of 1% for two year old funding and 3% for three and four year olds.

3.3 TD stated that the aim of the formula used to distribute the funding was to passport as much funding to settings as possible; T&W distribute 98.5% of funding received to settings as compared to the ESFA requirement of 95%.

3.4 PH stated that the PVI's will struggle with this funding and around 80 settings nationally are closing each week.

3.5 TD advised that the LA needs the Forum to vote on the central retentions but as there are only five members present, we are not quite quorate. CW called for those members present to vote and then an email vote could take place for the remainder of members to vote.

3.6 Of the five members present all voted in favour of the proposals within the paper.

3.7 The Forum will be updated on the email vote at the May 2023 meeting.

### **4. Update on High Needs Budget for FY2023-24 – TD.**

4.1 The Forum were provided with a paper which can be found here:

[Update on the HN budget for FY2023-2024.](#)

4.2 TD advised that despite the additional funding received in the FY2022/23 we are likely to end the year in a dedicated schools grant (DSG) deficit position including using all of the balances brought forwards from previous years.

4.3 As stated in previous papers the additional £3.4m funding that we will receive in FY2023/24, may not be sufficient to handle the additional pressures arising, a combination of more children and young people with high needs, more complex needs and substantial inflationary pressures on costs (e.g. pay awards).

4.4 The LA had planned to introduce a unified banding system in September 2023 but combined with the additional pressures on the HN budget and the ESFA's stated intent to

have a national banding in system this has now been postponed we are clearer about the national banding system.

- 4.5 CW asked how LAs in a deficit position would repay the funds, as LAs also have no funds. TD responded that the DfE has ring fenced the DSG deficit from the LA funds in the short term, but unless the DfE's intervention programmes are successful in reducing deficits, it is not clear what will happen in the longer term to such very large deficits.

**5. AOB - CW.**

- 5.1 There being no further business the meeting closed at 09.56.

**6. Next Meetings**

The dates of the forthcoming meetings for the academic year 2022/23, are as follows:

- Thursday 18th May 2023 at 9.30 am

[Planned Forum Meetings](#)